

Message Text

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43

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 IO-13 JUSE-00 NSAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4997

INFO AMEMBASSY RANGOON

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1. THE JULY 23 BANGKOK POST CARRIED AN AP STORY FROM WASHINGTON ABOUT A FORTHCOMING REPORT ON NARCOTICS TO THE HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE. THE AUTHOR OF THE REPORT IS REPRESENTATIVE LESTER L. WOLFF OF NEW YORK. THE AP STORY INDICATES THAT THE REPORT CONTAINS MANY OF THE CRITICISMS OF THAI ANTI-NARCOTICS EFFORTS WHICH WOLFF HAS MADE IN THE PAST.

2. IF THE AP STROY ACCURATELY REFLECTS THE CONTENTS OF THIS REPORT, THEN WOLFF'S REMARKS ARE OFF THE MARK IN THAT THE RTG HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY ACTIVE DURING 1973 IN BUILDING UP NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION MACHINERY AND ACHIEVING SIGNIFICANT ARRESTS AND DRUG SEIZURES.

3. BASED UPON A FRAGMENTARY ACCOUNT AVAILABLE HERE AT THIS TIME, WE SUGGEST THE FOLLOWING INTERIM PRESS GUIDANCE
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FOR RESPONSE TO ANY QUERIES NEWSMAN MIGHT HAVE ON THE

WOLFF REPORT.

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED:

(1) QUESTION: IS THERE ANY VALIDITY TO THE WOLFF REPORT QUOTING AMERICAN OFFICIALS AS SAYING THE THAI POLICE SELDOM SEIZE OPIUM CARAVANS, PARTLY BECAUSE OF LACK OF EXPERTISE AND PARTLY BECAUSE OF UNWILLINGNESS. RESPONSE: THE OPIUM CARAVANS YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT OPERATE IN REMOTE AND RUGGED MOUNTAIN AREAS AND ARE USUALLY HEAVILY PROTECTED BY SCORES OF ARMED MEN. THEY ALSO HAVE VERY GOOD INTELLIGENCE MAKING IT DIFFICULT FOR LARGE BODIES OF SOLDIERS OR POLICE TO GET NEAR THEM WITHOUT PRIOR WARNING. NEVERTHELESS THE THAI POLICE HAVE RECENTLY ATTEMPTED BLOCKING OPERATIONS AGAINST THESE CARAVANS, AND SUCCEEDED IN AMBUSHING ONE IN CHIANG MAI PROVINCE IN NORTH THAILAND ON JUNE 20, 1973, SEIZING 193 KILOGRAMS OF RAW OPIUM.

(W) QUESTION: WHAT ABOUT THE CONTENTION THAT U.S. ATTEMPTS TO GAIN COOPERATION OF THAI OFFICIALS HAVE LARGELY FAILED.

RESPONSE: THE U.S. AND THE RTG HAVE LONG COOPERATED IN THE AREA OF NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT. AT THE REQUEST OF THE RTG, THE BUREAU OF NARCOTICS AND DANGEROUS DRUGS HAS MAINTAINED A REGIONAL OFFICE IN BANGKOK FOR LIAISON WITH THE THAI POLICE, AND WITH THOSE OF OTHER GOVERNMENTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, SINCE 1962. THIS LIAISON BETWEEN THAI AND U.S. NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS IS LITERALLY ON A DAILY BASIS AND INVOLVES FAR MORE THAN THE MERE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION. U.S. OFFICERS OFTEN ACCOMPANY THAI NARCOTICS POLICE AS OBSERVERS ON THE LATTERS' MISSIONS WITHIN THAILAND. AS A RESULT OF THIS JOINT COOPERATIVE EFFORT NOT ONLY HAVE MANY SEIZURES BEEN MADE WITHIN THAILAND, BUT SEVERAL WELL ORGANIZED HEROING RANGS HAVE BEEN UNCOVERED AND DISRUPTED.

(3) QUESTION: THE WOLFF REPORT STATES THAT ABOUT A DOZEN THAI TRAWLERS, WHICH ARE USED TO SMUGGLE NARCOTICS FROM BANGKOK TO OTHER PORTS, SAIL UNIMPEDED THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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YEAR ROUND DESPITE OFFICIAL KNOWLEDGE OF THEIR USE, AND ARE THE KEY TO THAILAND'S DRUG TRAFFICE. WHY HAVEN'T THE THAI MOVED AGAINST THEM?

RESPONSE: THERE ARE LITERALLY THOUSANDS OF VESSELS OPERATING WITHIN AND FROM THE GULF OF THAILAND CAPABLE OF MOVING NARCOTICS. THE TRAFFICKERS HAVE GENERALLY BEEN EFFECTIVE IN AVOIDING DETECTION SINCE THE VESSELS LEAVE BANGKOK AND OTHER THAI HARBORS WITH CLEARED

PAPERS FOR OSTENSIBLY LEGITIMATE PURPOSES. AFTER CLEARING PORT, THERE IS NOT MUCH DIFFICULTY IN PRE-ARRANGING A RENDEZVOUS AND LOADING ILLEGAL CARGOES BEFORE PROCEEDING TO TRANSFER POINTS NEAR HONG KONG. THE RTG AND THE VIETNAMESE NAVY HAVE, HOWEVER, BEEN INVOLVED IN THE SEIZURE OF TWO OF THESE TRAWLERS, THE PHASOKORN SAMUT ON APRIL 29 CARRYING 5 1/2 TONS OF RAW OPIUM AND 126 KILOGRAMS OF MORPHINE, AND ANOTHER OFF PHU QUOC ISLAND JUNE 3 CONTAINING ALMOST A TONE OF OPIUM.

(4) QUESTION: WHY AREN'T THE THAI MORE ACTIVE IN DRUG SEIZURES?

RESPONSE: THE THAI IN 1973 WERE EXTREMELY ACTIVE IN DRUG SEIZURES. SOME OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT, ASIDE FROM THOSE MENTIONED ABOVE, WERE:

JANUARY 2, 1973: CHIANG RAI: 182.5 KILOGRAMS OF MORPHINE AND 4,135 KILOGRAMS OF OPIUM;

JANUARY 21, 1973: CHIANG RAI: 13 KILOGRAMS NO. 4 HEROIN;

FEBRUARY 17, 1973: CHIANG RAI-MAI SAI: 3,913 KILOGRAMS OF RAW OPIUM AND 261 KILOGRAMS OF MORPHINE;

JUNE 20, 1973; CHINAG MAI PROVINCE: 193 KILOGRAMS OF RAW OPIUM;

JUNE 22, 1973 CHIANG RAI PROVINCE: 700 GRAMS OF NO. 4 HEROIN;

JULY 3 1973: CHIANG RAI PROVINCE: 100 KILOGRAMS OF SMOKING OPIUM;

JULY 19, 1973: CHIANG RAI; 80 KILOGRAMS OF HEROING

JULY 21, 1973: ISLAND NEAR CHUMPON: 2 1/2 TONS OF RAW OPIUM.

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(5) QUESTION: WHY DON'T THE THAI MOVE AGAINST KEY NARCOTICS SMUGGLERS?

RESPONSE: THE RTG HAS ARRESTED FOUR SIGNIFICANT NARCOTICS SMUGGLERS DURING THE MONTHS OF JULY ALONE. THERE WERE ARRESTED ON JULY 10. LO HSING-HAN, COLLOQUIALLY KNOWN AS THE KING-PIN OF THE OPIUM TRADE, WAS ARRESTED ON JULY 18. END UNCLASSIFIED.

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